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Planning for Employment in the Greater Golden Horseshoe

Background Paper

May 2008

Prepared by

Ontario Growth Secretariat

Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal

Ontario

Table of Contents

1	Purpose	1
2	Introduction	3
2.1	The Greater Golden Horseshoe	3
2.2	Objectives and Scope of the Assessment	4
3	Regional Economic Overview	7
4	Region-Wide Planning for Employment Lands	10
4.1	Proactive Planning for Employment	10
4.2	Coordinated Data and Information on Employment Lands	11
4.2.1	Current Methodology for Determining Land Needs	12
4.2.2	Designated Versus Available Supply	13
5	Better Planning for Employment Uses	15
5.1	Design and Form of Employment Areas	15
5.2	Institutional Uses	17
5.3	Office Uses	19
5.3.1	Major Office Use	19
5.3.2	Other Office Uses	21
5.4	Retail Activities	22
5.5	Industrial Activities, Warehousing, and Logistics	23
6	Infrastructure and Servicing	25
6.1	Maximizing the Potential of Existing Employment Areas	25
6.2	Optimizing Access to the Transportation Network	26
6.3	Water, Wastewater, and Other Services	28
7	Planning for the Future	29
7.1	Proposed Criteria for Provincially Strategic Employment Areas	30
7.2	Proposed Future Strategic Employment Areas	32
8	Summary of Proposed Strategies	35
9	Seeking Feedback	40

1 Purpose

Planning for employment in an economy as diverse and ever-changing as that of the Greater Golden Horseshoe is a complex task. The locational needs and expectations of the key sectors of this economy vary widely and continue to evolve. From a land-use perspective, it is essential that there is enough readily available, serviced land to allow for future economic activities and continued prosperity. At the same time, it is critical to plan for employment in a way that revitalizes downtowns, and supports vibrant, complete, sustainable communities that are transit-supportive and pedestrian-friendly.

Recognizing that planning for employment[1] is a vital, yet often challenging issue, the Ontario Growth Secretariat is undertaking an assessment of employment area planning in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. There are many different and sometimes conflicting opinions on this important topic. The purpose of this background paper is to generate further discussion to feed into the assessment. The paper describes the objectives of the assessment, outlines findings to date, and suggests potential future actions. This background paper does not contain a detailed inventory of employment lands in the region.

> The Ontario Growth Secretariat looks forward to receiving comments and feedback by July 18, 2008. For more information on how to provide input, please see page 40.

The overall assessment may not result in a single product or policy change, rather it may include a series of initiatives that taken together will support better planning for employment in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Based on feedback received on this background paper, some of the possible products of the assessment may include:

- amended policies in the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006*;
- employment lands mapping;

[1] While there are many factors that influence the future prosperity of the region, the focus of this paper is planning for employment from a land use planning perspective.

- guidelines to support better planning for employment uses; or
- a regional database of employment lands.

When complete, this assessment will provide better overall direction about future planning for employment in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. This is an important piece of work in a region that, over the next twenty-five years, is forecast to grow by an additional 1.8 million jobs. While some of the products that result from this assessment may assist municipalities as they bring their official plans into conformity with the Growth Plan, the requirement for municipalities to conform to the Growth Plan or complete their conformity exercise should not be delayed by this assessment.

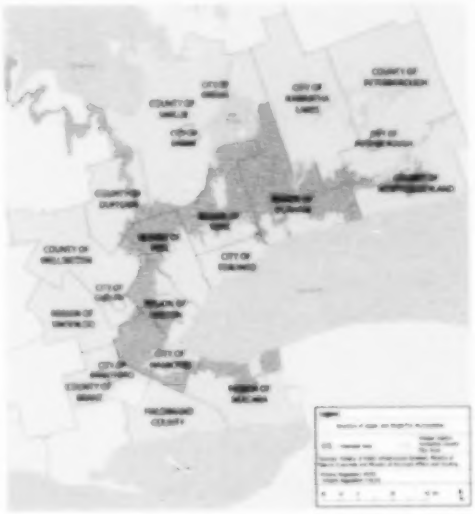
The Ontario Growth Secretariat is seeking feedback on the information and ideas in this background paper to help inform and shape the final outcome of the assessment. Throughout the spring and early summer of 2008, workshops will be convened to share information about the research carried out to date, solicit feedback, and work with all parties to elaborate on the potential strategies outlined in this paper. Following that process, more detailed products will be developed.

This background paper was developed based on technical research carried out by Metropolitan Knowledge International in partnership with Meridian Planning Consultants, Centre for Spatial Economics and CB Richard Ellis. In addition, it benefited from the input of a technical working group of municipal planning staff, provincial ministries, and stakeholder groups, as well as comments from a number of external technical readers.

2 Introduction

2.1 The Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Greater Golden Horseshoe is one of the fastest growing urban regions in North America. By 2031, it is forecast to grow by an additional 3.7 million people and 1.8 million jobs. The *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006* sets out a blueprint to maximize the benefits of this growth while minimizing the negative impacts that unplanned growth can bring. The policies in the Growth Plan help to ensure attractive, modern, livable, and vibrant communities in the decades to come.



The Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan Area

Around the world economies are changing, labour markets are shifting, and large city regions are emerging as competitive forces, vying with one another for investment. Within this context, there are a number of key factors that give specific regions a competitive advantage over others. The Greater Golden Horseshoe has a number of characteristics and strengths that place the region in an excellent position on the global scale. These include:

- a diverse economy that is supported by a wide array of key industries and clusters;
- a strategic location that is in close proximity to major United States markets;
- a highly educated workforce, whose social and economic diversity are critical factors for success in a knowledge economy;
- existing and planned infrastructure that helps to move people and goods, and provides important education, health, and other community services;

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- a diverse economy that is supported by a wide array of key industries and clusters;
- a strategic location that is in close proximity to major United States markets;
- a highly educated workforce, whose social and economic diversity are critical factors for success in a knowledge economy;
- existing and planned infrastructure that helps to move people and goods, and provides important education, health, and other community services;

- productive agricultural lands that are some of the country's finest;
- vibrant, livable communities, cultural amenities, and natural features that offer the kinds of creative and recreational activities that attract knowledge workers; and
- an economy in transition, with activity and wealth increasingly generated by service and knowledge industries.

2.2 Objectives and Scope of the Assessment

The *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006* contains growth forecasts for both population and employment to 2031. The employment forecasts take into account the fact that the economy of the Greater Golden Horseshoe is diverse. The projections comprise all types of jobs – office, manufacturing, industrial, retail, and institutional.

Planning for the land uses and infrastructure needs associated with these different kinds of economic activities is complex, particularly in a changing economic environment. Recognizing this, in section 5.3 of the Growth Plan, the Province committed to undertaking a further assessment of regional economic issues and employment area planning.

The overall objectives of the employment area assessment are to:

- help ensure a suitable supply of land for employment purposes in order to remain competitive with other jurisdictions;
- optimize existing and future infrastructure while protecting strategic lands to support the region's economic competitiveness;
- use current and future employment areas more efficiently to minimize the need for urban expansions (including maximizing the redevelopment of greyfields and brownfields);
- ensure that places of employment activity can be accessed by transit, walking, or cycling and are being planned for and designed in an appropriate way;
- plan for economic activities in a way that contributes to downtown revitalization, good urban form, community vitality, and a well designed public realm; and,
- promote the development of complete communities.

It is important to acknowledge that while land use planning and infrastructure investment for employment are the focus of this background paper, these are only two factors among many that influence where companies choose to invest and locate. The Province of Ontario is committed to ensuring the economic prosperity of the region and has taken many steps in this direction through the development of a number of key initiatives. This includes the work of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade through its creation of the Advanced Manufacturing Investment Strategy and, along with the Ministry of Research and Innovation, the Next Generation of Jobs Fund. These efforts, combined with the work and cooperation of the municipalities and businesses located within the Greater Golden Horseshoe, are critical to achieving sustained economic prosperity.

A Vision for Employment and Prosperity in the Greater Golden Horseshoe

Over the next twenty-five years and beyond, the Greater Golden Horseshoe will grow and prosper:

- The region will enjoy a strong, sustainable and diverse economy that will remain the engine of Ontario's growth.
- Opportunities for the clustering of various employment uses to support creative synergies, knowledge sharing, and innovation will be supported and maximized.
- Communities will be complete, with a mix of jobs and people, and will be well designed, compact, and efficient. They will be walkable and well-served by transit, enabling people to easily get from place to place.
- Jobs and services will help to revitalize downtowns, main streets, brownfields, and other areas that can be efficiently served by infrastructure.
- Highway and rail corridors will move goods efficiently and effectively to and from market.
- Land for manufacturing and logistics and other industrial activities will be available, where appropriate, along highway and rail corridors, near ports and inter-modal facilities.
- Investment and planning for hospitals, post-secondary facilities, and other government facilities will create jobs in existing urban areas, and reduce the unnecessary consumption of greenfield lands.

Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006

The *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006* was developed under the *Places to Grow Act, 2005*. The Growth Plan looks beyond the boundaries of any single municipality to address the challenges faced by the region as a whole, while respecting and promoting the role of municipalities in articulating their own, unique community vision.

By 2031, it is anticipated that there will be an additional 3.7 million residents and 1.8 million jobs in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Growth Plan outlines the vision necessary to plan for and accommodate this growth. This vision is grounded in the following principles that guide decisions on how land is developed, resources are managed, and public dollars invested:

- Build compact, vibrant, and complete communities.
- Plan and manage growth to support a strong and competitive economy.
- Protect, conserve, enhance, and wisely use the valuable natural resources of the land, air and water for current and future generations.
- Optimize the use of existing and new infrastructure to support growth in a compact, efficient form.
- Provide for different approaches to managing growth that recognize the diversity of communities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
- Promote collaboration among all sectors – government, private, and non-profit – and residents to achieve the vision.

The Growth Plan provides strong support for economic prosperity. It puts in place a framework for vibrant downtowns that will nurture innovation and attract investment. It supports the revitalization of brownfields and intensification of existing urban lands. It links investment in roads, transit, water and wastewater facilities, and other infrastructure to support forecasted growth.

The Growth Plan includes policies to help ensure that communities retain an appropriate amount and mix of land for employment purposes to accommodate future job growth. In providing guidance on employment issues, the Growth Plan:

- requires municipalities to meet certain tests as part of a municipal comprehensive review before converting lands in employment areas to non-employment uses;
- directs major office and appropriate institutional uses to areas with existing or planned frequent transit service;
- encourages municipalities to designate and preserve for future employment the lands near major highway interchanges, air and sea ports, and rail yards; and,
- requires employment areas to be planned in a way that supports transit and a compact built form.

3 Regional Economic Overview[2]

The Greater Golden Horseshoe is the economic engine of Ontario as its economy represents 70% of Ontario's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Of the nearly 3.5 million jobs in the Greater Golden Horseshoe in 2001, four out of every ten were in sectors that export their goods and services to markets in other provinces or countries (with the remainder providing goods and services to local markets, such as retail and personal services). This is higher than what is typical in other areas of Ontario because the Greater Golden Horseshoe includes several sectors that are heavily export-oriented. The manufacturing, business services, finance and wholesale trade sectors provide the majority of these export-driven jobs.

The Greater Golden Horseshoe is home to a wide array of economic clusters, including financial services, information technology and telecommunications, automotive, food and beverages, media, tourism, culture, biomedical and biotechnology, textiles and aerospace. The primary resource sectors, including agriculture and aggregate extraction, and resource-related economic activities such as food processing, are also important to the regional economy.

Economic and job growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe has been strong in most sectors over the past two decades. There are currently some challenges that the Ontario economy faces, including high oil prices, the strong Canadian dollar, and the recent softening in the United States' demand for Canadian products. However, given the cyclical nature of the economy and the year-to-year fluctuations that occur, when looked at over the long term, steady growth is expected to continue in output terms in *all* sectors with the strongest growth in the wholesale trade, finance, and other service sectors. The annual average output growth across all sectors – both export-based and otherwise – is expected to continue growing through to 2031, at an average annual rate of about 2.6%. This is slightly lower than the average annual rate of 2.8% observed from 1987 to 2005.

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[2] The Regional Economic Overview is based on research undertaken by Metropolitan Knowledge International for the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

Over the past twenty years, significant changes in Ontario's economy have also occurred. These transformations include the following:

- Ontario's economy has become increasingly export-based. Exports to other provinces or countries currently account for about 70% of Ontario's GDP; this is an increase from approximately 50% during the 1980s. The majority of current exports (50% of GDP) are to other countries, mainly to the United States.
- The service sector has experienced the greatest rates of output growth over the past two decades. This includes sub-sectors such as wholesale trade, finance, and business services.
- Even as the manufacturing sector continues to grow in terms of economic output and contributes significantly to the economy, the manufacturing and primary resource industries have stable or declining employment levels. This decline in employment is due to many factors, including global trends of increased productivity, outsourcing, and automation.

During this period there has also been a shift in the location of employment activities. For example, a number of sectors including manufacturing, office and retail have decentralized. These uses have moved away from historic downtowns to the suburban fringe and outer communities, often in a design and form that puts tremendous strain on infrastructure, is not easily accessible by walking or transit, and results in increased pressure to bring greenfield lands on-line for development.

Looking forward over the next twenty-five years, there will also be some new and emerging trends that will have important implications for land use planning.

It is expected that the **service sector** – including finance, insurance, trade, education, and health care services – will deliver the majority of new jobs in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. While all sectors are expected to increase their output, the health care and education sectors are expected to experience the fastest rate of job growth at more than ninety per cent and grow by more than 500,000 jobs by 2031. There will therefore continue to be a growing need to ensure that the region is appropriately planning for the service sector.

In determining where these service and institutional uses will be located, there exists a unique opportunity to achieve Growth Plan objectives for transit-supportive, pedestrian-friendly development. With its higher concentration of jobs and more flexible locational needs, the service sector is ideally suited to locating in urban growth centres, intensification areas, and along transit corridors.

The **manufacturing sector** is expected to continue to be a major contributor to the economy of the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the whole of Ontario. Productivity is expected to continue to grow in this sector, primarily due to new technologies and increases in production efficiencies. Research shows that the Greater Golden Horseshoe is following North American and global trends of building bigger and more efficient industrial facilities that house fewer employees, particularly in the logistics and distribution sectors. So, even as employment density (jobs per hectare) in manufacturing declines, it is expected that this important economic sector will continue to generate significant land demand.

4 Region-Wide Planning for Employment Lands

To maintain and enhance the Greater Golden Horseshoe's position in the global economy and to collectively reap the benefits that this brings, it is important that there is increased regional understanding, coordination, and collaboration around issues of employment lands planning. The following section outlines some of the key issues and challenges related to developing such an approach. It discusses how, through more proactive employment lands planning, the use of consistent designations and descriptions for various employment uses, and the better collection of region-wide employment lands information, the Greater Golden Horseshoe will remain well positioned to take advantage of the unique opportunities available to it.

4.1 Proactive Planning for Employment

During the development of the Growth Plan, a number of stakeholders expressed the need for a clearer understanding of employment trends in the Greater Golden Horseshoe and their implications for land use planning. However, there is also a need to develop a strong provincial vision that responds to these trends in a way that prepares the region for the next generation of jobs. This may involve planning not only for where these jobs will be located but also planning for the types of jobs that the region needs for its long-term prosperity.

Many municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe have already done some very good work to identify new and emerging trends and plan proactively for employment. This work has enabled them to ensure that they are identifying and protecting the right range of employment areas for future use, while still maintaining flexibility to respond to long-term market changes. This type of work is important for all municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe to undertake and will help to ensure that employment planning is up-to-date and in line with the future direction of the economy. Such a municipal analysis may include:

- an assessment of current and future land needs and related servicing;

- additional policies to support and protect strategically located employment lands in order to clarify appropriate uses in employment areas and/or to incubate emerging industries; and,
- additional policies in order to clarify what uses are to be considered "non-employment" or "major retail" uses.

Proposed Strategy

Feedback is being sought on the following proposed strategy:

> ***4.1 a)*** *The Province should expand upon its existing regional economic profile analysis to take into account major employment land need shifts. This analysis can then be used as guidance information by municipalities to undertake reviews of local economic development strategies and to refine their understanding of locational and other needs of specific employment uses.*

4.2 Coordinated Data and Information on Employment Lands

Another area of stakeholder concern is the need for a clear and consistent picture of employment land availability at the macro-level of the Greater Golden Horseshoe. This would be a valuable tool to assist municipalities and the Province in planning for future employment needs. It would also help to ensure that the region will not have an over-designation of employment lands and will continue to be in a position to attract investors and plan for important employment opportunities.

The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade launched the Ontario Investment and Trade Centre in February 2008. The Centre, a partnership between Ontario, other levels of government, regional economic development organizations, and business associations, is intended to:

- give global business leaders easy access to all investment services and expertise through a one window portal;
- showcase Ontario's advantages to companies, business leaders, and decision-makers from around the world; and,
- encourage businesses to locate in the province and create the next generation of jobs.

The Centre is developing a Geographic Information System database of available employment land and transportation access and eventually will have information on other key factors such as education, hospitals, schools, and the labour market.

There has also been some good work undertaken by the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario to collect and share region-wide data, however, there remain a number of challenges that make the collection of region-wide information on employment lands very difficult. For example, the two most likely and available central sources of data – Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) property-based data and official plan designations – are not designed for the purposes of a macro-regional analysis. A major issue with using this information for these purposes includes the lack of consistent terminology for and wide range of uses that municipalities permit in different employment areas. Further, when taken together, this information does not produce the big-picture vision that is needed at the regional level of the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

4.2.1 Current Methodology for Determining Land Needs

The current framework for the municipal analysis of land availability is the guideline called "Projection Methodology Guideline: A Guide to Projecting Population, Housing Need, Employment and Related Land Requirements" (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 1995). The general approach in the guideline is based on linking future population projections to future job creation. Population growth is forecasted and employment growth is derived from that using a simple jobs-to-people ratio. The total employment growth is then broken down into the three basic categories of employment: **major office employment**[1], **population-related employment,** and **employment lands employment**. Based on these estimations, municipalities designate various lands for employment purposes.

This approach fails to account for the fact that within these broad categories of employment there are a number of different uses with various land needs and other requirements. Recognizing this, some municipalities have developed supplementary or updated methodologies with more detailed terminology to

[1] Some municipalities might not consider a separate category for major office employment.

better define the unique characteristics of these different uses. While this work helps at the local level to plan for these uses, at the scale of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, this varying terminology makes it difficult to get a good grasp of overall supply and characteristics of employment land.

4.2.2 Designated Versus Available Supply

For both local and regional economic competitiveness there is also a need to have an accurate inventory of supply which is currently "shovel-ready". In many cases, employment lands have been designated by municipalities for development but the lands may not be available because of a lack of servicing, the lands may not be located in the places where demand exists, or the owner chooses not to bring the lands to market. This can result in a situation where there appears to be sufficient land supply across the Greater Golden Horseshoe but in reality, at the local level, there may be a shortage of "shovel-ready" lands.

Determining which employment lands can realistically be brought on market for development is dependent on a large number of factors. A major challenge for employment lands planning is the vastly different time horizons affecting the development process. For example, timelines for planning and construction of major infrastructure are often much longer than the economic development needs of both the private and public sectors. Other prime factors that affect when lands become market-ready include land assembly, multi-jurisdictional issues, and/or lack of consistency in local policies.

Proposed Strategy

Feedback is being sought on the following proposed strategies:

> ***4.2.2 a)*** *The Province should work with upper- and single-tier municipalities, building on existing work, to develop a consistent and shared database of existing and planned employment areas, and their attributes (e.g. size, serviced or not serviced, transportation access, etc.).*

> ***4.2.2 b)*** *The Province should work with stakeholders to develop a new approach for determining future land needs for employment that places greater emphasis on the unique needs of different sectors of the economy and on the growth management*

imperative to locate jobs close to where people live and in transit-supportive locations. The new approach would address:

- *the planning horizon and appropriate geographic scale at which to consider the needs of specific sectors*
- *typical variations and trends in employment densities and geographic variation, that can influence land needs*
- *the need for more consistent terminology across the Greater Golden Horseshoe including more specific categories of employment that reflect locational needs, form, compatibility, and opportunities*
- *the consideration of real supply to take into account issues such as availability of servicing in a timely manner, natural constraints to development such as topography and environmental protection areas, and market demand*
- *possible options to address the resource needs of smaller municipalities.*

5 Better Planning for Employment Uses

The form, design, and location of employment areas are all integral components to ensuring that there are good jobs available and accessible in a way that supports the development of more vibrant and complete communities. The following section examines some general issues regarding the design and form of employment areas, and specific employment types such as institutional, office, retail, industrial, warehousing and logistics uses.

5.1 Design and Form of Employment Areas

More compact and well- esigned employment areas will not only make more efficient use of land and infrastructure, but will make businesses more attractive for workers and consumers alike. The Growth Plan contains a number of policies to support this objective. For example, the Plan states that in planning for employment, municipalities will facilitate the development of transit-supportive compact built form and minimize surface parking. The Growth Plan also requires all intensification areas, including urban growth centres and intensification corridors, to be planned and designed to provide high-quality public open spaces with urban form and design standards that create attractive and vibrant places.

However, stakeholders have raised a number of challenges that need to be overcome to support the development of employment lands with good form and design, such as:

- zoning, parking, and other standards (including building code requirements) that can act as a barrier to more compact development;
- costs of good urban form, such as those related to urban design improvements (e.g. coordinated street furniture, street tree plantings, wide sidewalks, etc.) and the construction of multi-storey structures and underground or structured parking; and,
- lack of awareness around market requirements (e.g. standardized floor plates, industry standards, and business processes).

Many of these barriers can be addressed by municipalities, who are encouraged to use the planning and financial tools currently available to them such as new design

control provisions in the *Planning Act*, heritage property tax relief measures, the Development Permit System, and Community Improvement Plans. Municipalities should also review their zoning, parking, and other standards to ensure that they do not act as an obstacle to better urban form and design of employment areas. Further, it is important for businesses to realize the benefits of good urban form and design and incorporate these principles into their development plans.

Proposed Strategy

Feedback is being sought on the following proposed strategies:

5.1 a) *The Province should work with stakeholders to develop a set of guidelines to support better planning for employment uses. Some of the areas that these guidelines may examine include:*

- *general urban design principles that support attractive, functional development that fits the local context, and supports a vibrant public realm*
- *form and design required to support different economic activities*
- *parking and other standards with an eye to supporting more compact, pedestrian- and transit-supportive development.*

5.1 b) *The Province should provide support to municipalities in the use of existing tools, and explore the development of new tools and incentives, to support better urban form and design in employment areas.*

Financial Incentives and Tools

There are a number of financial incentives and tools available to municipalities to support good urban design and help focus development to specific areas:

- **Community Improvement Plans (CIPs)** allow municipalities to set out the municipal policy framework and programs to support the rehabilitation and revitalization of targeted areas. Through CIPs municipalities may introduce incentive-based programs that offer grants or loans for rehabilitation or energy efficiency and/or property tax assistance for environmental remediation.
- **Development Charges** can support development in existing built-up areas. Municipalities can also offer development charge waivers and exemptions to projects that support development and redevelopment projects in the downtown and adjacent areas.
- **Development Permit System** can expedite approvals for planning applications by combining elements of the existing zoning, site plan, and minor variance systems into one streamlined approach.
- **Design Control Provisions** in the *Planning Act* allow municipalities to regulate matters relating to exterior design, character, scale, appearance, and design features and sustainable design.
- **Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program (BFTIP)** supports the clean-up of contaminated sites through proportionally matching municipal tax assistance with relief from the provincial education portion of property taxes for eligible brownfield properties.
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**, currently in use for certain pilot projects (West Don Lands and Toronto-York Subway Extension), enables these municipalities to help support redevelopment and public infrastructure development.
- **Heritage Property Tax Relief Measures** allow municipalities to provide a 10% to 40% reduction in property taxes for properties designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The Province shares in the cost of the program by funding the education portion of the property tax relief.
- **Transit-Supportive Land Use Planning Guidelines** describe how various forms of urban development and redevelopment can be made more accessible by public transit. The Province is currently in the process of updating these guidelines.

5.2 Institutional Uses

Institutional uses such as schools, universities, health care facilities, and public sports/cultural facilities are major contributors to quality of life and should be planned to keep pace with the changing needs of a growing population and to promote more complete communities. Employment forecasts for the Greater Golden Horseshoe indicate that a large portion of employment growth over the

next twenty-five years will occur in the institutional sector, particularly education and health care.

Certain institutional uses, such as emergency services, have specific locational requirements and are spatially distributed throughout a community. Other uses, such as hospitals, courthouses, and correctional facilities, often have specific requirements for larger land parcels that are well serviced and accessible.

The location of public institutions can have lasting effects on travel patterns, urban vitality and form, and the health of downtowns. Public institutions can be substantial trip generators; locating and designing them in such a way that encourages transit use, cycling, and walking can reduce the need for automobile travel. Further, when located within urban areas, in proximity to shops, services, and suppliers, these facilities can act as an economic catalyst, creating spin-off employment in the surrounding area and generating considerable economic activity.

Innovative alternatives to the prevailing campus-style institutional development model exist. The **MaRS Discovery District** in Toronto is one such example where, through adaptive re-use of an historic building, an institutional use was created on previously developed land in downtown Toronto benefiting from existing transit infrastructure, shops, services and connecting to an existing network of teaching hospitals, the University of Toronto, and affiliated research institutes.

The **Durham Courthouse** is another example of how the redevelopment of a former brownfield site in downtown Oshawa is contributing to the revitalization of an urban growth centre.

Conversely, traditionally planned institutional uses can result in public sector sprawl - as exemplified by large, land intensive, hospital, university or school developments on the urban fringe of communities - that needs to be addressed and minimized. Some of the factors that may contribute to this type of development include building code restrictions, separation distance requirements, and current funding formulas.

In the United States, many jurisdictions have reviewed their regulatory environment regarding building construction and have developed "Smart Codes" to help facilitate development that supports growth management objectives.

Proposed Strategy

Feedback is being sought on the following proposed strategies:

5.2 a) The Province, other levels of government, and the broader public sector should explore ways to ensure that their decisions on the location and funding of their respective institutions and facilities support the Growth Plan policies of intensification, downtown revitalization, and complete communities.

5.2 b) The Province should work with stakeholders to undertake a review of potential barriers to the siting and design of public institutions in a way that contributes to achieving the objectives of the Growth Plan, particularly those objectives related to downtown revitalization.

5.3 Office Uses

Long-range forecasts also show that in addition to growth in the institutional sector there will be an increase in employment in the service sector, much of which will be housed in offices. These uses have a high potential to be located where they would benefit from and support high-quality transit service. They can also be used to help revitalize downtowns, and be a major component of successful development around major transit station areas, along intensification corridors or in brownfields and greyfields redevelopment.

5.3.1 Major Office Use

Major office is defined in the Growth Plan as employment in free standing office buildings of 10,000 m^2 or greater, or with 500 jobs or more. These buildings generate a significant number of trips and are thus both key supporters and beneficiaries of high-quality, frequent transit service. Further, higher concentrations of major office employment around a central location can promote greater synergies and make opportunities for jobs, housing, shops and services more viable. However, many major office buildings are locating in places such as highway interchanges, industrial areas or business parks that are not transit-supportive and are not able to take advantage of the potential of these major trip generators.

Ensuring that major office is located in transit-supportive locations is a key objective of the Growth Plan. For example, the Growth Plan directs major office development to urban growth centres, major transit station areas, or areas with existing frequent transit service or existing or planned higher order transit service. The recently established Metrolinx will help to support this objective. It has been charged with the coordination, planning, financing and development of an integrated, multi-modal transportation network to help implement the Growth Plan.

Major office will also play a very important role in achieving the Growth Plan's density targets in urban growth centres. Further, in many urban growth centres there are a number of opportunities to leverage public land holdings to support and encourage major office uses. There are also a number of existing fiscal and policy incentives that are available to municipalities to help facilitate this kind of desirable development such as Community Improvement Plans, development charges, and the Development Permit System. Municipalities should explore the use of these tools to support the location of major office uses in urban growth centres, major transit station areas, or other areas that are well served by transit.

Proposed Strategy

Feedback is being sought on the following proposed strategies:

5.3.1 a) *The Province should continue to work with municipalities and Metrolinx to ensure that priority is given to transit investments that support large employment nodes of major office and employment activities, such as in urban growth centres, major transit station areas, and along intensification corridors.*

5.3.1 b) *Where appropriate and where market conditions allow, the Province and municipalities should use land holdings and investments in urban growth centres, major transit station areas, or areas with existing frequent transit service, or existing or planned higher order transit service to support the development of major office uses.*

5.3.2 Other Office Uses

While major office use is treated as a separate planning category in the Growth Plan, smaller office uses are less clearly defined and are often permitted in many different locations. These offices can take many forms, such as smaller branch offices, medical offices in business parks, or business services that support an industrial facility. While the presence of offices (small and large) in business parks and industrial areas that mix office and industrial uses contributes to higher densities in these areas, these offices are rarely built or located in a transit-supportive manner.

It is important that more specific designations are used for other office uses (i.e., non-major office), to distinguish between ancillary office uses for manufacturing, industrial uses or warehousing and other office uses. In doing so, both types of office uses can be better planned for and directed to appropriate locations. For example, office uses that are not directly related to manufacturing, industrial uses or warehousing should be directed to areas where they can take advantage of the benefits of clustering and be of a form and design that supports viable transit service. Doing so will also help to minimize the fragmentation of large contiguous employment lands that are better suited to manufacturing, industrial or warehousing uses. Further, it is important for ancillary office uses, where appropriate, to be sited and designed in a more compact and transit-supportive form, as this will help to make more efficient use of the site and make it more accessible for employees and visitors.

Proposed Strategy

Feedback is being sought on the following proposed strategy:

5.3.2 a) The Province should work with stakeholders to develop a set of guidelines to support better planning for office uses. Some of the areas that these guidelines may examine include:

- *planning for various office uses in a manner that makes more efficient use of land and is more transit-supportive*
- *planning for more specific land use designations for office use*
- *supporting the clustering of office uses, where appropriate.*

5.4 Retail Activities

Retail trade is a fundamental economic activity and accounts for a large number of jobs in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Retail is also a key component of mixed-use communities. Local retail activity offers the opportunity for residents to meet their daily needs traveling by foot, bicycle, and public transit. Retail businesses also improve the overall quality of life in a community and contribute to neighbourhood revitalization.

Better planning for retail activities will not only help to take advantage of the opportunities for more vibrant, complete communities, but it will also help to protect important employment lands that are better suited for other types of economic activities. In recent decades, many new retail developments have taken the form of power centres clustered around major highways. These large-format retail stores are often designed primarily for automobile access, with large parking lots and low-rise buildings that fragment important employment lands. Clarity and consistency in municipal official plans regarding which employment areas may or may not include retail uses will go a long way to ensuring that land is available for the industries requiring large contiguous blocks near major infrastructure, while at the same time ensuring that appropriate areas are identified for retail uses.

There are many opportunities to plan for and design various types of retail (including large-format) in a way that supports the redevelopment and / or retrofit of older, under-utilized commercial properties. This is a trend that is being seen in many jurisdictions throughout North America, the United Kingdom, and Europe with the introduction of sustainable design and building practices that better link these new developments with the surrounding community and environment.

Proposed Strategy

Feedback is being sought on the following proposed strategy:

5.4 a) *The Province should work with stakeholders to develop a set of guidelines to support better planning for retail activities. Some of the areas that these guidelines may examine include:*

- *proactively planning for the appropriate location and design of major retail, including large-format retail*
- *overcoming barriers to mixed-use retail developments in intensification areas.*

5.5 Industrial Activities, Warehousing, and Logistics

Industrial activities, warehousing, and logistics[4] require large tracts of land for large building footprints. These activities may also require separation from sensitive land uses such as residential, and require good access to distribution and supply chain networks. They typically have a low employment density (jobs per hectare) and the primary transportation demand is for supplies and goods movement in and out of the property in a timely manner.

The Growth Plan encourages municipalities to designate lands within settlement areas that are in the vicinity of existing major highway interchanges, ports, rail yards, and airports for manufacturing, warehousing and associated facilities. The Growth Plan also states that land uses in settlement areas adjacent to, or in the vicinity of, inter-modal facilities, rail yards, airports, dockyards, and major highway interchanges are to be compatible with and supportive of the primary goods movement function of these facilities.

Stakeholders continue to cite the challenges for land use planning that result from fragmentation and the introduction of incompatible uses into large contiguous tracts of employment land, which would be better suited for manufacturing or related activities.

Recent provincial policy changes require greater justification and coordinated planning for the conversion of lands in employment areas to non-employment uses. For example, the *Planning Act* provides the authority to municipalities to protect employment areas and both the Provincial Policy Statement, 2005 and the Growth Plan require a comprehensive review to be undertaken to justify a conversion to non-employment uses. Moreover, the Growth Plan addresses a concern raised by many stakeholders about the conversion of lands in employment areas to major retail uses. The Growth Plan clarifies that where major retail is not already permitted in an employment area, it is considered a conversion of use and must meet certain policy tests before a conversion can occur.

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[4] Logistics includes the management of freight and information throughout the total supply chain from the original raw material source to the consumer of the finished product. It encompasses factories, assembly and packing plants, warehouses, distribution centres, and retail outlets.

However, these policy tools do not replace the need for municipalities to proactively plan for different types of employment activities and the needs of emerging sectors. Municipalities need to review their existing employment areas on a regular basis to determine appropriate uses for each area, and to identify which areas, if any, should be reserved entirely for industrial and manufacturing activities and which may be more appropriate for a mix of office, retail, residential and other uses. The need for clarity in permitted uses needs to be balanced with the need to maintain flexibility to respond to changes in the employment market as outlined in earlier sections.

Proposed Strategy

Feedback is being sought on the following proposed strategy:

> ***5.5 a)*** *The Province should work with stakeholders to develop a set of guidelines to support better planning for industrial, warehousing, and logistics uses. Some of the areas that these guidelines may examine include:*
>
> - *supporting proactive planning for industrial, warehousing and logistics uses*
> - *developing appropriate criteria to identify employment areas that should be set aside for industrial, warehousing, and logistics uses.*

6 Infrastructure and Servicing

Infrastructure and servicing are necessary to support employment growth and the continued economic competitiveness of the Greater Golden Horseshoe. As they often represent considerable investment from the various levels of government, it is critical that infrastructure and servicing are properly planned for and efficiently used. This section looks at ways to use existing and planned infrastructure to support employment growth. Specifically, it examines taking advantage of the potential of existing, well-served employment areas, supporting effective goods and people movement, and ensuring that servicing is better aligned with employment planning.

6.1 Maximizing the Potential of Existing Employment Areas

Many employment areas are well located within existing communities, however these sites are often left vacant or underutilized in favour of greenfield development. Focusing and encouraging appropriate employment uses within existing urban areas can bring new investment and economic activity to these areas, while at the same time making more efficient use of infrastructure investments and minimizing the amount of greenfield land required for development. While the Growth Plan does not set a specific target, employment intensification is a major objective that is supported by a number of Growth Plan policies.

However, stakeholders identified many factors that affect the ability to bring more jobs to existing employment areas and take advantage of existing infrastructure. Some of these include:

- fragmented ownership and increasing value of land caused by demand from the residential sector;
- costs associated with the need to improve or rehabilitate existing building stock and meet current market demands;
- lot configuration and site accessibility issues;
- zoning and building code restrictions;
- environmental issues (contamination, flooding, etc.); and,
- sensitivity of surrounding land uses.

It is important that municipalities fully examine the potential of existing employment areas when planning for employment. They should also review existing land use policies to identify and overcome barriers to increasing employment intensification. Further, where appropriate, municipalities should investigate the use of financial incentives and tools (see page 17) to support and protect well located employment areas in existing built-up areas for future employment.

Proposed Strategy

Feedback is being sought on the following proposed strategies:

6.1 a) *The Province should explore the development of new tools and incentives to help facilitate the re-use of older yet strategically located employment areas for continued employment activity.*

6.1 b) *The Province should work with stakeholders to develop guidelines to help municipalities and others identify areas in existing urban areas that are well located for employment uses and to investigate ways to overcome barriers to the re-use of these areas.*

6.1 c) *The Province should look at ways to overcome barriers to redevelopment in existing areas through a review of existing land use compatibility guidelines.*

6.1 d) *The Province should continue to support the redevelopment of brownfields.*

6.2 Optimizing Access to the Transportation Network

Good transportation infrastructure is fundamental to economic prosperity. The key transportation challenge in planning for employment is ensuring that good transportation options are available to link employees to their jobs, while also ensuring that goods and services can get to market easily and efficiently.

As discussed earlier, because they are significant trip generators, major office, retail and institutional uses have tremendous potential to benefit from and support transit if they are appropriately designed and located. In addition to the work of Metrolinx, which is developing a regional transit plan that will help implement the Growth Plan, municipalities also need to explore new and innovative approaches to providing transit to these types of employment uses.

Other employment sectors, such as manufacturing, warehousing, and logistics, are particularly sensitive to the need for good access to trade corridors. Large, contiguous tracts of land near or adjacent to major transportation routes should be the focus for meeting those needs. As discussed, the Growth Plan contains policies to encourage lands within settlement areas that are approved for development near highway interchanges and other major transportation facilities (such as ports, rail yards and airports) to be designated and preserved for manufacturing, warehousing and associated facilities. The Growth Plan also indicates that the first priority for highway investments is to facilitate the efficient movement of goods by linking inter-modal facilities, international gateways, and communities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Metrolinx is currently developing a Regional Transportation Plan for the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton. As a part of that process, it has released a series of green papers on key transportation issues for discussion. These papers include: *Towards Sustainable Transportation, Mobility Hubs, Active Transportation, Transportation Demand Management, Moving Goods and Delivering Services, Roads and Highways*, and *Transit*.

For more information visit: www.metrolinx.com

Proposed Strategy

Feedback is being sought on the following proposed strategies:

6.2 a) *The Province should continue to work with municipalities and Metrolinx to ensure that priority is given to transit investments that support large employment nodes of major office and employment activities, such as in urban growth centres, major transit station areas, and along intensification corridors.*

6.2 b) The Province will continue to use its investments in highways in the Greater Golden Horseshoe to support efficient goods movement.

6.3 Water, Wastewater, and Other Services

The timely provision of water, wastewater and other services may pose a challenge in planning for employment areas. If these services are not properly planned for over the long-term they can result in significant up-front costs that can affect the timing and phasing of development. The traditional approach of servicing greenfield employment areas is through residential development. Since residential development carries greater predictability, the case is usually made that greenfield employment areas must be accompanied by residential greenfield development. This can lead to fewer large contiguous employment areas, as well as inadvertently undermining efforts to achieve residential intensification.

Proposed Strategy

Feedback is being sought on the following proposed strategy:

6.3 a) Municipalities should ensure that servicing for large contiguous employment areas is properly planned for and that regional water and wastewater master plans adequately account for the provision of servicing to these areas when it is required.

7 Planning for the Future

The Growth Plan identifies twenty-five urban growth centres as areas that are to be planned and supported as high density employment centres to attract provincially, nationally, or internationally significant employment uses. The urban growth centres, and the nodes along the corridors that link them, as shown in the Growth Plan, are to be a focus for future higher order transit investment, as well as major office and major institutional uses that generate high commuter travel demand. These areas will remain a strong focus for land use planning and investment to support economic growth and accommodate a significant number of future jobs.

In order to support future economic prosperity, it might also be necessary to identify, at a conceptual level, other strategic employment areas, as well as opportunities to support these areas through infrastructure investment, policy and tools, and/or real estate management. Strategic employment areas may support an exceptional cluster of employment activity that is or has the potential to become a key driver of the regional economy.

Some strategic employment areas are already established. These include:

Downtown Toronto

Toronto is home to a number of regionally and nationally significant employment clusters on a scale unique in the country. Some of these clusters include finance, business and professional services, food and beverage, research and innovation, information and communications technology, and arts and media. Many of these clusters are key hubs in each of their respective industries and their growth is indicative of the skills-based economic trends predicted for the region. In particular, downtown Toronto's clusters are the foundation of the city's economic base and a focal point for the regional economy. The total output of g[illegible]ods and services produced in the City of Toronto was just under $130 billion (measured at current prices) in 2007, accounting for almost 10% of Canada's GDP.

Pearson International Airport Area

The Pearson International Airport area is a key economic driver in southern Ontario. The airport is strategically located within the region and will continue to attract employment uses to the surrounding lands. Businesses that locate near the airport benefit from access to major highways and close proximity to other firms, employees, and a large customer base. In 2005, Pearson Airport and abutting employment areas supported over 185,000 jobs generating economic activity in the transportation sector. Additionally, improved transit access to the airport is being planned to better integrate it with the regional transit system.

Canada's Technology Triangle

Located in the Region of Waterloo and City of Guelph area, Canada's Technology Triangle contains a number of high-tech, automotive, advanced manufacturing, and bio-tech industries, as well as a strong business and finance sector. The area continues to be a leader in many pioneering technologies. Canada's Technology Triangle employed more than 18,000 employees at more than 400 high-tech companies and was also home to 150 research institutes garnering $290 million in private-sector research and development in 2004. In close proximity are three universities (Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier, Guelph) as well as the Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning that provide a strong foundation for the local information and communications technology industry.

7.1 Proposed Criteria for Provincially Strategic Employment Areas

In the future, new strategic employment areas will emerge. There may be a need for the province to proactively identify these areas and invest in them in order to ensure that they are well positioned to accommodate major new economic investment. A logical step in attempting to identify future employment areas that are of particular significance is to develop a set of criteria by which to evaluate various locations. The following proposed criteria for provincially strategic employment areas[5] were developed based on the characteristics of established strategic employment areas, feedback from inter-ministerial and technical working groups, stakeholder consultations, consultants' advice, and literature reviews of best practices for strategic employment lands planning:

[5] Criteria are not listed in order of priority. Strategic employment areas may meet some or all of these criteria.

- **Inter-regional economic significance.** Strategic employment areas house clusters of employment or firms that serve a provincial, national or international market. They also support the growth of major economic activities that have inter-regional significance.
- **Significant scale and cluster of employment activity**. Strategic employment areas support and accommodate a critical mass of employees, floorspace, or total output.
- **Close proximity to major infrastructure**. Strategic employment areas are found adjacent to or in close proximity to major transportation infrastructure, such as airports, provincial highways, rail corridors, higher order transit, ports and border crossings.
- **Proximity to major markets.** Strategic employment areas are well served and accessible to major markets in Canada and the United States.
- **Support overarching growth management objectives of the Growth Plan.** Strategic employment areas provide for the efficient use of major infrastructure and support other objectives, such as the intensification or expansion of existing uses, the redevelopment of vacant lands, or transit-supportive land use.
- **Skilled Labour Force**. Strategic employment areas are in close proximity to a highly skilled workforce. In particular, proximity to major educational institutions is an important advantage for some economic sectors.
- **Research and Development**. Strategic employment areas are in close proximity to key sites of knowledge creation that help support and incubate new products and ideas. This may include a post-secondary campus, research centre, or similar type of facility.
- **Innovative and forward-looking**. Strategic employment areas may house an industrial or service cluster that significantly strengthens Ontario's position in the knowledge-based economy. These areas support investment in new technologies to improve productivity or the development of innovative products that advance key sectors such as clean automotive and other green technology, health and biotechnology research and development, creative industries (digital media and information and communications technology), and pharmaceutical research and manufacturing.
- **Multi-Level Collaboration.** Strategic employment areas have support from various levels of government, community, industry, and other organizations to overcome barriers, facilitate development and investment opportunities. This type of collaboration creates a supportive environment

that ensures these areas continue to be a focus for economic activity and growth.

7.2 Proposed Future Strategic Employment Areas

There may be some areas with attributes that give them a strong potential to meet the criteria discussed in the previous section. These areas may be a focus for further technical and policy analysis to ensure that the employment lands in these areas can be preserved for their intended use, can remain in large parcels, and can fulfill their purpose. It may be appropriate under very specific circumstances to ensure that these strategically important lands will be reserved for future employment purposes, no matter how long in the future they may be needed, or where they may be located in relation to an urban boundary. However, careful consideration is also needed to ensure that these areas do not detract from important employment activities in urban growth centres.

This means that in some specific cases, there may be a need to identify strategic employment areas over a time period longer than the twenty-year planning horizon currently in use. The Provincial Policy Statement, 2005 and the Growth Plan provide policy direction to designate sufficient lands to meet projected needs based on this planning horizon. However, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2005 also provides for an alternative time period for specific areas of the province, as a result of a provincial planning exercise or a provincial plan. The issue of timeframes will require further examination and consultation with stakeholders. Based on feedback, analysis would need to be undertaken to ensure that the identification of these strategic areas aligns with provincial policies. The development of additional policy tests and/or criteria may be required.

However, it is important to recognize that the ability to anticipate employment trends with any degree of certainty beyond the current planning horizon is difficult. When longer-term time horizons are used, there is the potential for the designation of lands in the wrong locations, creating artificial expectations amongst landowners, or incorrectly justifying costly investments in infrastructure in lands where development may be delayed much longer than originally anticipated. Experience from the past has shown that over-designating lands for employment has led to increased pressure to convert them to residential uses and

a reduction in the viability of bringing employment uses back to brownfield/greyfield areas.

The challenge is to achieve a balance that meets and respects the needs of the competitive marketplace while achieving growth management objectives.

The Ontario Growth Secretariat is seeking feedback on the possible identification of future provincially strategic employment areas. Some areas for further analysis may include downtown Hamilton, Highway 404/407 area in the Town of Markham, employment lands close to the 403/QEW corridors, a Greater Toronto Area Eastern Gateway such as the Oshawa area, and the Gateway Economic Zone and Centre in the Region of Niagara as described in the Growth Plan.

Proposed Strategy

Feedback is being sought on the following proposed strategies:

7.2 a) *The Province should work with stakeholders to explore ways that it can support established and future strategic employment areas through:*

- *Further work to identify and/or protect established and future strategic employment areas*
- *Targeted infrastructure investments*
- *Technical analysis (e.g. site-related information to assist in the identification of underutilized land)*
- *Exploring ways to overcome development constraints and barriers, such as,*
  - *land assembly*
  - *servicing improvements*
  - *addressing inter-jurisdictional issues*
  - *expediting the approval process.*

7.2 b) *If necessary criteria are met, the Province should consider mechanisms to conceptually identify the general location and/or characteristics of future strategic employment areas beyond a twenty-year planning horizon, to better coincide with long-term infrastructure planning and servicing strategies. This would still require municipalities to meet existing urban boundary expansion policy tests, and*

potentially additional tests, prior to designating these future employment areas for development.

8 Summary of Proposed Strategies

To support better planning for employment lands across the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Province is seeking feedback on the following proposed strategies:

4.1 a) The Province should expand upon its existing regional economic profile analysis to take into account major employment land need shifts. This analysis can then be used as guidance information by municipalities to undertake reviews of local economic development strategies and to refine their understanding of locational and other needs of specific employment uses.

4.2.2 a) The Province should work with upper- and single-tier municipalities, building on existing work, to develop a consistent and shared database of existing and planned employment areas, and their attributes (e.g. size, serviced or not serviced, transportation access, etc.).

4.2.2 b) The Province should work with stakeholders to develop a new approach for determining future land needs for employment that places greater emphasis on the unique needs of different sectors of the economy and on the growth management imperative to locate jobs close to where people live and in transit-supportive locations. The new approach would address:

- the planning horizon and appropriate geographic scale at which to consider the needs of specific sectors
- typical variations and trends in employment densities and geographic variation, that can influence land needs
- the need for more consistent terminology across the Greater Golden Horseshoe including more specific categories of employment that reflect locational needs, form, compatibility, and opportunities
- the consideration of real supply to take into account issues such as availability of servicing in a timely manner, natural constraints to development such as topography and environmental protection areas, and market demand
- possible options to address the resource needs of smaller municipalities.

5.1 a) The Province should work with stakeholders to develop a set of guidelines to support better planning for employment uses. Some of the areas that these guidelines may examine include:

- general urban design principles that support attractive, functional development that fits the local context, and supports a vibrant public realm
- form and design required to support different economic activities
- parking and other standards with an eye to supporting more compact, pedestrian- and transit-supportive development.

5.1 b) The Province should provide support to municipalities in the use of existing tools, and explore the development of new tools and incentives, to support better urban form and design in employment areas.

5.2 a) The Province, other levels of government, and the broader public sector should explore ways to ensure that their decisions on the location and funding of their respective institutions and facilities support the Growth Plan policies of intensification, downtown revitalization, and complete communities.

5.2 b) The Province should work with stakeholders to undertake a review of potential barriers to the siting and design of public institutions in a way that contributes to achieving the objectives of the Growth Plan, particularly those objectives related to downtown revitalization.

5.3.1 a) The Province should continue to work with municipalities and Metrolinx to ensure that priority is given to transit investments that support large employment nodes of major office and employment activities, such as in urban growth centres, major transit station areas, and along intensification corridors.

5.3.1 b) Where appropriate and where market conditions allow, the Province and municipalities should use land holdings and investments in urban growth centres, major transit station areas, or areas with existing frequent transit service, or existing or planned higher order transit service to support the development of major office uses.

5.3.2 a) The Province should work with stakeholders to develop a set of guidelines to support better planning for office uses. Some of the areas that these guidelines may examine include:

- planning for various office uses in a manner that makes more efficient use of land and is more transit-supportive
- planning for more specific land use designations for office use
- supporting the clustering of office uses, where appropriate.

5.4 a) The Province should work with stakeholders to develop a set of guidelines to support better planning for retail activities. Some of the areas that these guidelines may examine include:

- proactively planning for the appropriate location and design of major retail, including large-format retail
- overcoming barriers to mixed-use retail developments in intensification areas.

5.5 a) The Province should work with stakeholders to develop a set of guidelines to support better planning for industrial, warehousing, and logistics uses. Some of the areas that these guidelines may examine include:

- supporting proactive planning for industrial, warehousing and logistics uses
- developing appropriate criteria to identify employment areas that should be set aside for industrial, warehousing, and logistics uses.

6.1 a) The Province should explore the development of new tools and incentives to help facilitate the re-use of older yet strategically located employment areas for continued employment activity.

6.1 b) The Province should work with stakeholders to develop guidelines to help municipalities and others identify areas in existing urban areas that are well located for employment uses and to investigate ways to overcome barriers to the re-use of these areas.

6.1 c) The Province should look at ways to overcome barriers to redevelopment in existing areas through a review of existing land use compatibility guidelines.

6.1 d) The Province should continue to support the redevelopment of brownfields.

6.2 a) The Province should continue to work with municipalities and Metrolinx to ensure that priority is given to transit investments that support large employment nodes of major office and employment activities, such as in urban growth centres, major transit station areas, and along intensification corridors.

6.2 b) The Province will continue to use its investments in highways in the Greater Golden Horseshoe to support efficient goods movement.

6.3 a) Municipalities should ensure that servicing for large contiguous employment areas is properly planned for and that regional water and wastewater master plans adequately account for the provision of servicing to these areas when it is required.

7.2 a) The Province should work with stakeholders to explore ways that it can support established and future strategic employment areas through:

- Further work to identify and/or protect established and future strategic employment areas
- Targeted infrastructure investments
- Technical analysis (e.g. site-related information to assist in the identification of underutilized land)
- Exploring ways to overcome development constraints and barriers, such as,
    - land assembly
    - servicing improvements
    - addressing inter-jurisdictional issues
    - expediting the approval process.

7.2 b) If necessary criteria are met, the Province should consider mechanisms to conceptually identify the general location and/or characteristics of future strategic employment areas beyond a twenty-year planning horizon, to better coincide with long-term infrastructure planning and servicing strategies. This would still require municipalities to meet existing urban boundary expansion

policy tests, and potentially additional tests, prior to designating these future employment areas for development.

9 Seeking Feedback

This background paper is intended as a starting point for a dialogue on planning for employment in the Greater Golden Horseshoe - an issue that is important to the economic prosperity of the region and the entire province. This paper has described the objectives of the assessment, outlined some challenges and opportunities and suggested potential future actions. To help in the preparation of future materials it is extremely helpful for the Ontario Growth Secretariat to get feedback on this document.

Comments are welcome on the overall assessment, however there are number of specific areas that the Ontario Growth Secretariat is particularly interested in getting feedback on:

- The specific issues that were addressed in this paper.
- The proposed strategies that were described.
- Future products that might be developed.
- Criteria for the identification of established and future strategic employment areas and proposed provincial actions to support these areas.

In the spring and early summer of 2008, the Ontario Growth Secretariat will also be convening facilitated workshops to share information about the research carried out to date, solicit feedback on the issues raised in this background paper, and work with all parties to elaborate the potential strategies. Following that process, more detailed materials will be developed.

Feedback on this document can be submitted by July 18, 2008 to:

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Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal

ISBN 978-1-4249-6178-8
Paid for by the Government of Ontario
© Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2008
Disponible en français